

THE
Commonweal

A European View

American Civilization

by Thomas Molnar

Educational Plus and Minus

View With Alarm

by James B. Kelley

Painful Realities

The Church in Latin America

by Joseph B. Gremillion

A Point of View

Editors, contributors and readers alike appear to agree that what is most significant and important about The Commonweal is that it is an embodiment of a point of view. Such an impression is reflected in the quotations from, and references to, The Commonweal in various metropolitan newspapers and other mass media.

The Commonweal's viewpoint is most clearly manifest in the week-by-week editorials on events and public issues. It also is developed, less directly perhaps, in a variety of articles on many subjects—social, cultural and political—by such typical contributors as: Horace Gregory, Thomas Molnar, H. A. Reinhold, Bede Griffiths, Francis E. McMahon, Donald Barr, Douglas Hyde and J. N. Moody.

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THE Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

— week by week —

INCIDENT IN PERU

THE LATIN AMERICAN tour of Vice President Nixon was intended as a means of "fact-finding" about conditions in these countries and as a display of United States interest in Latin American affairs. It was realized by the Administration that developments in Latin America—economic and political crises, and a rising wave of hostility towards the United States—made some such action urgently necessary. But the mixed reception given the Vice President at most of his stops, culminating in the shameful episode in Lima, where he was stoned, spat upon and pelted with garbage, makes it clear that our relations with the Latin American republics are even more dangerously strained than was feared.

The point has been made over and over again that the Peruvian rioters represent only a tiny fraction of that country's population, and that the seemingly wide-spread anti-Nixon demonstrations are chiefly the accomplishments of small but well-organized Communist groups. And it has been noted that Mr. Nixon's "courage, patience and calmness," in the words of President Eisenhower, must enhance not only his personal prestige but that of the United States, in Latin America as well as at home. All this is true, but the seriousness of what has happened, or rather the seriousness of the situation underlying the events, must not be discounted.

For instance, the role of the Communists in the anti-United States outbursts should not be exaggerated. The Communists in Latin America are clearly doing their utmost to exploit the area's economic and other troubles so as to intensify resentment against the United States, but equally clearly the Communists are not themselves responsible for these highly exploitable conditions. It is too easy for us to escape an unpleasant reality by dismissing it as "Communist propaganda." In the dictator-

ship of Paraguay, for example, the authorities labeled as "Communist" the demonstrators who were shouting, "Long live liberty."

Equally unprofitable, it seems to us, are the complaints by some commentators that Mr. Nixon should not have made his trip at all, that he should not have overruled his advisers and gone to San Marcos University, that the police in some of the cities he visited, Lima in particular, were culpably lax in their measures to protect him. There is something to each of these positions, but now, after the fact, they are not much to the point.

What is to the point is that Latin America generally is swept by a resurgence of bitter feeling against the United States, a development of great potential danger for us and for them. This fact is not new; Mr. Nixon's recent misadventures serve only as new and shocking proofs of its existence.

BUT WHAT are we to do about this distressing and dangerous condition? Vice President Nixon has reported a profound "misunderstanding" in Latin America of United States policies and motives, and this view suggests that the problem is chiefly one of disseminating information, correcting the misunderstanding by supplying the truth.

Unfortunately, the difficulty is larger than that. Some part of Latin American resentment of the United States is due to the pressures of irrational nationalism, to the hostility of the have-nots towards the haves, to the effects of Communist propaganda, and to other factors for which the United States can hardly be held accountable. But it must be admitted that some part of our southern neighbors' ill will towards us rests upon an all too palpable foundation of fact.

For one thing, the Latin American republics cannot reconcile our professions of solicitude and

friendship with our callously unilateral economic policies. We have reduced our imports of Latin American raw materials, on which whole national economies depend, forcing down the market price of Peruvian zinc and lead, Brazilian and Colombian coffee, Uruguayan and Argentine wool, and other major exports. The cut-price sale of United States surplus cotton, described as "dumping" by our cotton-producing allies, is a further blow to shaky economies. And the current drive in Washington to raise tariffs presents still another threat to the economic stability of these nations.

In addition to these grievances, Latin Americans charge that United States policies support harsh and unpopular dictators, to the detriment of genuinely democratic forces; granting the delicacy of this problem for us, the accusation nevertheless contains more than a little truth.

Finally, there is the long-standing complaint in Latin America that United States concern with its southern neighbors is sketchy and sporadic. Diplomatic neglect of Latin America is perhaps understandable, our State Department having been urgently occupied in recent years with Europe, the Middle East and Asia, but it is still a mistake.

Anti-United States feeling in Latin America must be dealt with in these terms, the terms of its causes, and not on the level of public relations or propaganda. As it has been necessary to say in the past, of the same Administration but in another connection, good policies make good propaganda; bad policies make bad propaganda.

AGREEMENT ON NUCLEAR TESTS

MOST OBSERVERS are of the opinion that the United States and the Soviet Union find themselves stalemated in regard to their respective nuclear weapons. Each has the capacity virtually to destroy the other; yet neither could attempt to do so without itself being literally pulverized. That is one reason the U.S.S.R. is not expected deliberately to embark upon a war with such weapons—or even upon a war with conventional weapons if that would in all probability provoke a retaliation with tactical A-bombs. The danger lies rather in the possibility that the Soviet Union might dispatch air-borne "volunteers" armed with conventional weapons to such a lesser conflict as a war that had broken out in the Middle East.

The existence of a "balance of terror" does not, however, preclude all possibility of the visitation on this earth of an atomic war. What is unlikely to

occur deliberately may come about through human miscalculation, the malfunctioning of some high-speed defense mechanism, or the production of nuclear weapons by a number of smaller nations. As weapons advance in destructiveness and deliverability—and as speeds increase—the mechanisms for deterring retaliation have to be stepped up. The more instantaneous the retaliatory mechanisms, the greater the chances of a war resulting from a miscalculation that cannot be undone. Also, nuclear tests have produced so much radioactive fallout that certain scientists charge them with causing thousands of deaths now and in the future.

These reasons and other much-debated allegations imbue the worldwide demand for controls of nuclear armaments with a new urgency. The Soviet declaration that it has called off further tests of its own nuclear weapons makes the moment particularly opportune for seeking a binding test-halt agreement. In recent years the people of the world have become appalled by the thermo-nuclear arms race and its threat of universal destruction. There is urgent need of setting up an effective system of controls; few things would serve better to lessen international tensions than the concluding of a self-enforcing nuclear-test-halt agreement.

The United States appears to have an opportunity to propose such an agreement in a way that would be difficult for the Soviet Union to reject. It would be limited in many ways. It could be a trial agreement for a period such as two years. It could require a minimum of monitoring and therefore not interfere with the conduct of Russia's internal affairs—perhaps twenty-five to thirty seismological stations on Soviet territory would provide detection of all major tests there. Banning further tests would prevent the emergence of other nuclear powers, a development that would make effective control that much more difficult. This agreement would, in fact, have to provide against tests in European colonial possessions as well as in Communist China. If a limited plan to end nuclear tests can be agreed upon now and should work well for Soviet Russia, the United States and all concerned, it could then be extended and controls amplified and strengthened. In some such way the world might eventually be delivered from the threat of H-bomb destruction.

THE T.V.A. AS A MODEL

IT IS twenty-five years this month since President Roosevelt signed the act setting up the Tennessee Valley Authority. In its first quarter-

century the T.V.A. has abundantly demonstrated what the integrated development of a major river valley in the interests of all can do for farms and homes and industries throughout a several-state area. In such matters as supplying power for key defense industries, producing low-cost fertilizer and building up local purchases of the products of other areas, this major project has also established its usefulness to the nation as a whole.

In only one way has T.V.A. failed to fulfill the hopes of its originators: primarily for political, if not ideological, reasons it has not been followed up by similar projects developing other American river valleys. Yet other countries have not been so blind to T.V.A.'s wider potentialities. This month's *Progressive* (Madison, Wis.) lists the following developments it has already inspired in whole or in part: the Helmand Valley Authority, Afghanistan; the Cauca Regional Corporation, Colombia; Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority, Australia; Damodar Valley Corporation, India; Khuzestan Project, Iran; Litani River Authority, Lebanon; Palapoan Commission, Mexico; Puerto Rico Water Resources Authority, Puerto Rico.

PACIFIST PROTEST

FOR THE fifth successive year most citizens in our country participated in a civil defense exercise. And once again, a group of pacifists from the Catholic Worker, led by Dorothy Day, were arrested for refusing to take shelter during the air raid drill. This year the group was given a suspended sentence of thirty days and admonished to obey the law in the future. They had all protested against the simulated attack and the drill "because they are a method of preparation for war" and "there is no defense against nuclear weapons except a cessation of war." These are the same reasons which members of this group offered in previous years when they were convicted and jailed.

Several things have changed since the drills of last year. Since then the Soviet Union has announced that it has successfully fired an intercontinental ballistic missile and the United States has entered the competition of launching successful earth satellites. The road to weapons of swift and total destruction has, it is clear, grown steadily steeper. And there is no apparent sign that either the Soviet Union or the Western powers will soon turn from that road.

The results of the air-raid drill, which was pronounced the best ever, indicated that on the basis

of existing H-bombs almost half a million people would have been killed in New York City alone. While we do not join in the pacifism of those who were arrested, we cannot, in the light of such statistics, dismiss their protest lightly. It is part of a larger protest against all the horrendous weapons which man has devised for his own destruction, and such a protest should not be regarded as a criminal act. To many people, in fact, this protest will seem like a lone act of sanity in a madding world.

But we believe in air raid drills, however limited their efficacy. And we must continue to do so until they are shown to be utterly useless or until weapons cease to be an insistent fact of modern life. Since neither of these alternatives seems an immediate likelihood, we will, it is probable, go on participating in air drills with the grace most citizens display. And our society—if it is the one we envisage and would like to live in—our society will make room for those who, like the members of the Catholic Worker, feel bound in conscience to protest against actions which, in their eyes, prepare for destruction.

THE COMMUNIST EMPIRE

THE MANY shifting events within the Communist empire have frequently caught western observers off balance. For within the Communist bloc, for many commentators, fact and fancy walk too closely together. The many questions raised, for instance, about the status of Nikita S. Khrushchev and his apparent struggle to maintain power must remain unsettled, even partially unformed, until more than uncertified rumor comes from Russia.

In such areas of fancy and speculation even Russian "authorities" have been known to make wrong judgments. But speculation is inevitable and necessary. If the assertions coming from Yugoslavia, now harangued by both Russia and Red China, have any basis, China is attempting to become an equal partner and is urging a harder stand than Khrushchev would choose. And Belgrade, it seems evident, is continuing to assert its independence.

Such open divisions between members of the Communist bloc are welcome and not entirely unexpected. At the least they force discussion among the satellites and show the possibilities of Titoism. And, just as important, they suggest possible alternatives which we must consider if we are to form correct estimates of our own foreign policy.

American Civilization

*It is characteristic of Americans to consider
the phenomena of their way of life as
inalterable data of the human condition*

by THOMAS MOLNAR

THE DAY on which I first looked at Max Lerner's book *America as a Civilization* (Simon and Schuster. \$10.) happened to be the ninth anniversary of my arrival in the United States. Nine years make a good slice of life, and I may well have lost in the meantime my "European point of view." One is likely, after all, to put conscious and unconscious obstacles in the way of remaining a detached observer. Yet even a long-resident European will see a book about American civilization—and American civilization—from a special viewpoint.

It seems to me that two characteristic features impress most immigrants and visitors after they have observed the country at some leisure. The first is that for Americans, other nations, other civilizations, languages and ways of life appear to be vaguely unreal. It would be easy to label this feeling—and corresponding attitude—*isolationism*, or to explain it by three thousand miles of water from the nearest non-American shores. When I say, however, that in spite of participation in two world wars, foreign aid grants, involvement in the cold war, and, not least, in spite of tourism, Americans hardly recognize the reality of other civilizations and world views, I mean that for them the world remains a raw material to be shaped, a community which is not yet, but which one day may be, will be—Americanized.

The second, almost immediate observation of the traveler is the ubiquity of *social pressure*. This country had to be carved out of nature's chaos: the land made productive and habitable, the people gathered from other continents and forged into a nation, the institutions either transplanted or improvised without the continuity of traditions. The developed habit of active manipulation of human beings and objects is, I think,

at the root of community-pressure on the individual and his desire to conform.

What is absent, as a consequence, from the make-up of Americans is the important ingredient of European civilization: *comparison* with other nations and with the past of one's own, with other social classes, economic systems, philosophies, schools, tastes, dreams. While every nation in Europe is historically, politically, and culturally involved in inextricable relationships with other lands, the United States looks at a twin sister across its northern borders, and at a much weaker and poorer, thus non-imitable, neighbor down south. And further, the class structure of a European country is such that the various classes develop conflicting views and ideologies, adopt different ideals, admire and imitate those foreign nations which embody them. In the United States, on the other hand, intellectuals, elites, workers and middle classes, all have had enough tasks on their hands, all have been occupied with the building, transformations, and adjustments of their own country. Interest in foreign parts has been casual and superficial, or limited.

I would, therefore, say that it is characteristic of Americans to consider the phenomena of their way of life as *inalterable data* of the human condition. The European looks at life with a certain detachment (the bitter-sweet fruit of comparisons), and with the realization that there is a gap between reality and the ideal. Deep down he believes, in spite of his ideological commitments, that this gap can never be bridged, and is not surprised at, nor shocked by, failure and disappointment. The American ignores this gap, and with it the margin of uncertainty in human affairs. He neglects to consider the twilight zone around people, institutions, ideologies and civilizations. When he is obliged to recognize that somewhere there is an ultimate flaw in the human armor, he is staggered by this revelation,

Mr. Molnar, who has taught on both coasts of the U. S., frequently writes on political and cultural matters.

his system of security collapses, and he tends to seek escape in a radical nihilism.

WHAT FOLLOWS from the American refusal to “live in depth,” or, in the terms of some observers, from Americans being “innocent” (Philip Wylie), or “quiet” (Graham Greene)? It follows, for one thing, that American civilization is one of the most powerful constructions in the history of men. It was born out of a singleness of purpose, activism, boundless energy in the service of turning the land into a vast industrial-democratic society. The American dream is not obstructed by opposing ideologies, doubts, class-struggles; it is engaged here on earth, and if it is expressed in numbers and measurements, this is a sign of its commitment to material transformations.

But the world and the fate of men cannot be explained by numbers and measurements, nor even by the sparkling accomplishments obtained through their manipulation. Yet—and this is the second consequence of America’s insistence on its “innocence”—we refuse to recognize the ideological character of our public philosophy and to express this recognition in a coherent form. This is, perhaps, the one great intellectual defect of the United States, one which baffles those foreigners who listen in vain to the voice of their American interlocutors.

This defect is reflected in Mr. Lerner’s book too. *America as a Civilization* records the history and explores the mechanism of the changes on the American scene, without re-thinking the whole process, without an attempt to find its center of gravity and its destination. A civilization, however powerful, acquires its naturalization papers only when it begins to doubt itself, that is, to compare itself to others and—more important—to an inaccessible ideal. It develops then a new dimension, a depth in which it may be ultimately engulfed, but which provides it with a quasi-sacral character.

Such a point of view Max Lerner regards as irrelevant to America, or perhaps he refuses to adopt it. At any rate, the absence of a will to re-think America as a civilization deprives his book of a focus. To evaluate critically this bulky volume would be as impossible as to write the critique of the map of the United States: like a map, this book includes the whole landscape; it stresses “objectivity”; it tries to balance one fact with another, this disapproval with that praise. In the end, as Mr. Lerner himself suspects, the many pages become a “patriotic paean to American growth.”

The process of re-thinking American civilization should, naturally, be a never-ending one. I do not think this is the task of men like Mr. Lerner, whose book is a characteristic phenomenon of American civilization rather than a critique of it. A genuine analysis must be conducted from a more general, historical point of view

than he is willing to adopt. It must ask whether the appearance of the United States in the course of history may not change significantly this history. This question, or rather, this chain of interlocking questions, is, without a doubt, one of the main pre-occupations of the entire western world which finds itself on the threshold if not of “Americanization,” at least of the American century.

Here is this huge, wondrous country, the European thinks, the materialization of dreams, utopias, social planning that only the boldest men dared conceive during the age of ideologies. There is here a free and mobile society whose members have access to the fruit of their labor, to comforts and pleasures, who are equal before the law and who eagerly say “present” when opportunities knock at the door. Work as plight and misery has largely been eliminated, concern for the full dinner pail has been transformed into a matter-of-fact expectation of almost all creature comforts, education and travel. That permanent source of rivalry and conflict, namely distinct and hostile social classes, has been either unknown in America or has been absorbed first by the melting pot and then by the pluralistic society which, through its well-oiled mechanisms and tolerance of the “other fellow’s opinion,” has brought about the nearest state to social consensus and confidence in the body politic.

ALL THESE have been dreams of Europeans, from Plato to Campanella, from Thomas More to Saint-Simon. And yet, one is almost convinced that the United States is no continuation of Europe, that it is the nucleus of a “post-western civilization,” authentically New World. These terms need, of course, careful handling. In what sense is the United States a radically new civilization, one whose characteristic features are now imitated and adopted—or which develop spontaneously—in other parts of the globe?

In one sense, the United States is curiously retarded. I agree with Mr. Lerner’s statement that “America is the child and product of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and is therefore committed to the values of science, freedom, and rationality.” I would even say that if a Rousseau or a Diderot (not a Voltaire, though) returned to life today, he would emigrate to the United States; the first as a new Thoreau, the second confident that he might re-edit the Encyclopedia, this time with a Foundation grant.

But if the United States has its roots in the eighteenth century, it lacks much of Europe’s nineteenth- and twentieth-century experience: whole chapters of ideologies, revolutions, dictatorships are absent from the last one hundred and fifty years of American history, as are also absent Nietzsche and Kafka, or the search for myth and faith. Mr. Babbitt from Zenith, Ohio is, in many respects, a cousin of Flaubert’s Monsieur Homais

from Yonville near Rouen, with the same confidence in "science" and with the same provincial outlook.

Now, for better or worse, the ideals of the eighteenth century have remained active forces in America, sometimes in the form of popular myths which provide fuel for the country's technological progress and social cohesion. When I say, then, that America lacks certain experiences of other parts of the western world, I also mean that America offers now a fresh and original image to those parts. This image is certainly puzzling: many European economists, for example, are trying to decide whether the U.S. economy is in its pre-Marxian or post-Marxian phase; others find contradiction between the freedom of intellectual pursuits and social cohesion which often assumes quasi-totalitarian forms; yet others wonder if America will solve the conflict between prosperity-bred mass culture and the tragic sense of life manifest in the works of the "most American" writers, Eugene O'Neill, William Faulkner, Thornton Wilder, Arthur Miller.

It is my belief that these puzzles reflect the astonish-

ment of European observers before America as a pluralistic society. This structure of American society, the most important single contribution of the United States to the world, explains the varied forms that the American spirit of enterprise assumes, but also the frequent stagnation of genuine *ideas* and *values* which may not travel far among jealous groups. It also explains the facile public appeal of slogans—in advertising, entertainment, education—which are so vague and vacuous as to be easily absorbed by simple contact.

Thus social cooperation as an ideology has its light as well as its dark sides. But for better or worse, America has been practising it since the beginning of its history, and it is this experience which it now tries to export to Europe. The nations of that continent, severally or federated, have entered the age of pluralistic societies because the same leveling forces are present among them as in our country. As we have skipped their age of conflict, they have ignored our experiment in cooperation. It is, perhaps, now their turn to learn.

EDUCATIONAL PLUS AND MINUS

View With Alarm

by JAMES B. KELLEY

IF PROFESSORS in Soviet universities have been reading American magazines and newspapers in recent months, they will be suffering from frustration. For it must gall these professors to read of the near perfection of the Soviet educational system which has been claimed in this country. Not only are all Russians not nine feet tall, but at the risk of being called subversive, I might even say that not all Russian schools are made for geniuses. It might be well if we all relaxed a little, and quietly took stock of what we have, what we do not have and what we need.

The first thing we could do is to assess the Soviet system correctly. Recently I saw two flagrant examples of our readiness to do quite otherwise. One appeared in the *New York Times* in connection with a review of a book on Soviet education. A picture showed a girl standing before a blackboard on which was drawn a right circular cone, and alongside the cone were the equations involved in determining its volume. The caption for the picture read: "A collective farm worker studies college-level mathematics at a

school in the Georgian Republic, U. S. S. R." The mathematics shown on that blackboard was that of solid geometry, a high school course in the United States. (I might say parenthetically that I am not certain that solid geometry is of sufficient value to spend an entire semester on it in high school or any place else.)

Another instance was a picture which appeared in a national news magazine showing a Soviet student—purportedly a graduate student in physics—doing an exercise on a blackboard. The course was nuclear physics. As a number of correspondents pointed out in letters to the editor after the picture appeared, the problem being worked out scarcely belonged in graduate physics. I remember teaching the same type of course at the junior level in an American college about five years ago.

Whether the error rests with the caption writers on American magazines or with editors who have no idea of what constitutes college work is really unimportant. We are jumping to some very risky conclusions in assuming things about our own educational system and the Soviet system which might well be wrong in both cases. We might ask ourselves the question:

Mr. Kelley, who writes frequently on scientific matters, has been for many years both teacher and research scientist.

Granted that we know what the Soviet system is, do we want the Soviet system of education in the United States? Or should we be reviewing our own system, quite apart from sputniks, to determine whether it meets the needs of a people who, like it or not, are leaders in today's world?

IN THE reviews of our own educational system the most frequently recurring serious charge is that we are not getting our best youngsters into college. Figures have been published which indicate that annually about 200,000 young men and women capable of college training never enter college because of lack of funds (An equally interesting statistic might be the number who do not belong but who managed to get into college.) The accuracy of this figure can probably be challenged from both sides. No matter whether it is too large or too small, it is too large if *one* worthy student is kept out of college for financial reasons. No country is so rich in intelligence that it can bar from learning any youngster capable of learning. There is only one real requirement for admission to the halls of academe; possession of the requisite intelligence.

We are shocked by stories of the ignorance of our high school graduates; stories which tell that only a few percent, four to five, study physics in high school; that mathematics is being slowly removed from the curriculum; that not only are high school graduates ignorant of foreign languages but they are almost illiterate with regard to English. We are shocked because we are worried about our immediate physical security. We are afraid of missiles and thermonuclear warheads; but we do not seem to be afraid of our failure to provide the world with our share of leadership.

Actually I am made far more fearful for our future by a story in one of our national magazines about an American Rhodes scholar who had to ask his tutor to assign him books only in English, than I am by any stories of Soviet technology. I am more inclined to cry than I am to laugh when I read that American businessmen prefer "Dekes" to "Phi Betes"—this in June 1956—because Phi Betes are apt to be independent thinkers rather than "dynamic conformists" and business is crying for young men who can conform dynamically. When the dean of a large and famous law school—this in January 1956—says that his freshman law students cannot read or write simple declarative sentences, despite the fact that they have bachelor's degrees from many of the nation's leading universities, I wonder if we have a future in world history. My concern is deep and my anxiety is great because these are examples of our "educated men." Our top scholarship winners are ignorant of languages considered standard learning in Europe; our future lawyers have trouble with reading and writing. What is going on, if anything, in our colleges?

If we are not educating great numbers of our youngsters who deserve to be educated, and if many of those we are pushing through college appear to have resisted learning in such miraculous fashion as has been indicated, then it is time we took some simple concrete steps to change this situation.

FIRST, a system of national scholarships could be inaugurated which would be open to any youngster who could pass the competitive examinations. These examinations should be national—somewhat like the present College Board examinations, but considerably more difficult. Any student wishing to receive a scholarship should be successful in examinations of high standards. Any high school that wanted to gain its share of scholarship winners would have to see that its curriculum was strong enough to be competitive. Colleges would not have to worry about courses in basket-weaving expanding out of proportion because students who would qualify through these examinations would not be basket-weavers at heart.

No restrictions should be placed on colleges chosen or courses to be studied. The nation needs writers, philosophers, artists, composers, lawyers, physicians and businessmen as much or more than it needs engineers and physicists. The graduate and professional schools should receive their share of such scholarships, and any capable student who satisfies the requirements of the graduate or professional school of his choice should, after taking a suitable comprehensive examination, be awarded a scholarship to continue his work. He should be eligible for such a scholarship whether or not he held a scholarship as an undergraduate student.

Further, research work should be far better organized than it is at the present time. The candidate for a doctoral degree in many of our universities frequently spends more effort in fighting red tape, running down a thesis adviser who really cares and trying to find a thesis topic which might have some relation to scholarship than he does in learning anything. The four deans of graduate schools who recently bemoaned the graduate school mess at the doctoral level could have gotten the same information their study turned up by stopping the first ten graduate students they met in the corridors of their schools. There is not a wearer of the doctor's hood who did not know in detail every complaint the deans "discovered."

It should also be acknowledged that the doctor's degree has been misused and made into a kind of college teaching certificate, which is a prerequisite for academic advancement. A doctor's degree is basically a scholarship degree. It should attest to the recipient's ability to conduct independent research of a high order. It should not be proof or disproof of his ability to teach. College administrations have, it is clear, de-

cided that the Ph.D. is some sort of college teacher's license; but this only shows the narrow vision and incomplete understanding of what constitutes scholarship on the parts of college presidents and deans. There is no reason why a good teacher should be prevented from advancing in the college ranks because he lacks a doctor's degree. Good teachers are rare enough without college administrators trying to exterminate them.

Colleges need to do a good deal of self-questioning about the trends in admission requirements and retention standards. Time does not permit a detailed curriculum analysis, but I can say that my own experience in college teaching led me through and across some

amazing courses of study and strange degree standards. Colleges frequently seem to be more interested in producing halls of learning than minds which are learned. Numbers have been confused with accomplishments, and numbers of diplomas have been confused with the attainments of scholars.

The education of our youth is the concern of everyone. It is part of the national cultural security that we have a steady flow of young men and women in the arts, sciences and professions. Government, industry, all of us have a stake in this because we all need intelligence which has been trained and developed, if ever it is to bloom for the benefit of every one of us.

PAINFUL REALITIES

The Church in Latin America

by JOSEPH B. GREMILLION

THE TRAVEL AGENCY arranged my visas for the other Latin American countries I planned to visit, but the Venezuelan consul in New Orleans wanted me to apply for my visa in person. Once the office clerk saw I was a priest, complications set in. Only the home government at Caracas could grant visas to priests. The New Orleans office could issue them to laymen, but not to me.

Since time was short, I cabled eighteen dollars worth of information. But after waiting the specified two weeks I received no response and had to settle for a thirty-six-hour transient's pass. My day of grace in Venezuela fell in the week before last December's "me-or-nobody" plebiscite which triggered the fall of dictator Jiménez.

Mine was no cloak and dagger mission. I secreted no coded messages and intrigued with no plotters, just sort of gawked around at the oil and ore boom, reflected in the neon signs and shimmering chrome of the late model autos racing over, under and through the new Jiménez turnpike. And I managed to talk to a few people.

A couple of days back, students of the Catholic University had gathered for a rally, as students have done since the university was in its Parisian spring. This Caracas demonstration was directed against a dictator's rule, as was a recent campus rally in Hungary. The Latin strongman did not resort to tanks and tommy-

guns this first time; that came later. He merely declared Christmas holidays had begun. That closed the school and made unauthorized assembly a compound risk.

A couple of weeks later five priests were jailed, among them Father Pablo Barnola, rector of Catholic University, and Father Jesus H. Chapellin, editor of *La Religion*, for refusing to quench the revolution's first flames. That and subsequent chapters we all know well. The press, secular and Catholic, has told us. The *New York Times* of January 23 reported: "At 11:35 A. M. Tuesday church bells in Caracas sounded the signal for the general strike. Huge crowds thronged the streets shouting 'Down with tyranny.'"

Several hundred fell before the bells rang again for Sunday Mass.

I am a priest, pastor of a parish. Never have I had to make the decision: "Our church bell shall—or shall not—signal my parishioners to attack the police station down the street. To shoot down Sergeant Juan Gomez, to whose wife and little ones I gave Our Lord this morning at Mass." The president of our Holy Name society has not come by night seeking absolution before the morrow's attack. (What are his motives? Is the regime a lesser evil? Is violence justified?) The nineteen-year-old president of the local college Newman Club has not been crushed by a tank driven by his nineteen-year-old neighbor. (Not in Korea, but in the cathedral plaza, before the bishop's eyes.) And the dead boy's father has not come to me to swear vengeance. ("Some day, somehow, I'll get his guts!

Father Gremillion is the pastor of St. Joseph's parish in Shreveport, La., and the author of *The Journal of a Southern Pastor*.

That I vow to God and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe!")

What a fortunate pastor I am. None of these dilemmas confronts me. I worry only about the building debt and going steady, divorce and desegregation, all night adoration and getting enough hosts for Holy Week Communions. So with what diffidence I write about the Church in Latin America. Still I must dare to share something of the sympathy and grief that grip me upon beholding her sad condition.

I SPENT only six weeks hurrying through nine countries: calling upon officials, editors, educators; visiting my brother-priests; talking with a hundred or more of their parishioners. I had dinner in their homes, caressed their children, told them something about the Church in the U. S. A.

How much they want to know us. We are children of the same Father, washed by the same Blood of the Son, made one in the same Mystical Body which is souled by the same Spirit. And yet how little we know of one another. It is, therefore, to try to deepen our understanding and enliven our abstract love into more concrete concern that I risk these few impressions.

First, Latin America's chronic political and economic instability weakens the Church grievously.

Have you ever experienced an earthquake? A thousand to one you have not. Your parish church and home have not survived repeated seismic shocks. But newsreels have shown you what the convulsing earth can do to a building, and to a nervous system. Transfer the image to political ground and the social structure.

I am not a political historian. I am merely recalling my six weeks of conversations with eye-witnesses to the chronic tremors which have become natural to the Latin civic terrain. The revolution now sputtering to an end in Colombia began in 1948; the most recent dictator was overthrown in May 1957. Bolivia's last full-blown turnover dates from 1952; about half the country is now trying to secede and quasi-martial law presides. Argentina bears the scars of Peron and still feels his influence. In their spring pastoral letter the Paraguayan bishops lament the one-party government. Brazil's Vargas seized power in 1937 and ruled by dictate until his "legitimate election" in 1950. Venezuela's situation introduced this article. Batista's Cuba awaits the next round of Castro's rebellion.

How many rulers have come to power through force in Latin America during the century and a half since Bolivar? In these twenty republics how many dictators were in turn toppled by violence? I cannot say offhand whether two hundred eruptions would be an accurate estimate and I cannot offer a seismographic reading on each quake. But as a priest and pastor I can somewhat sense what these civil upheavals mean to Church and conscience, clergy and people.

We Catholics of the United States have no norm of experience by which fully to understand and sympathize. For one hundred sixty-nine years the same constitution has assured for us the same civil rights enforced by the same legitimate authority. Our Church and State tensions *re* education, trusteeism, immigration, desegregation are mere growing pains; mere migraine headaches as compared with Latin epilepsy, always chronic and threatening, often acute, collapsing the social body, deranging the common mind, searing the soul of the people's culture and being—the Church.

Consider again the Venezuelan example we began with. What archbishop in the United States, what rector of a Catholic college, what editor of a religious paper has had to torment his soul and search his conscience and seek crucifixion courage in a degree comparably demanded of his counterpart in Caracas during the past year? And for years before in that country, and for generations past in all twenty nations, the traumatic dilemmas have harassed hierarchy and laity alike.

We have had it so easy here. By comparison even our racial issue is but an animated family disagreement, even Little Rock's troops but a fatherly paddling. Feelings are hurt, but no fratricidal feud will result; our young brother *will* now vacate the kitchen and eat at the dining room table like all the rest—*by due process*.

I WILL NOT rocket off into July Fourth claps of patriotic thunder. I only beg that when we deplore the Church of Latin America for being sick (which it is), or dying (it might be in some places), let us refrain from holier-than-thou finger-pointing at today's bishops and clergy, teachers, parents and lay leaders. Some Catholics in the U. S. react to the suggestion that we extend a helping hand to our Latin brothers in the household of the Faith with a condemnatory "Why can't they take care of themselves?"

Such cavalier brush-offs sound like the armchair general never exposed to fire. Who can say he would have done a better job in the actual historical realities? Our Latin brothers in the Faith today deserve our admiration. What heroic demands are made of most priests there compared to what is demanded of me—and of our American clergy in general, through no merit of our own?

We have been blessed with immunity from most of the political, social and economic plagues which have infected Latin America. Imagine, we have had only one Civil War! Our people have not inherited from the French Revolution the ideological genes of laicism and rabid rationalism. Our immigrant millions came into a country rippling with political strength, rich in economic promise, ripe for the harvest. Priests and sisters, especially Irish and German, came along with their people.

In Latin America most of the clergy were citizens of

Spain and Portugal; many become fugitives during the long revolutions. The new "Liberal" republics silenced or expelled the hierarchy for decades on end during the 1800's. The educational system was crushed with the suppression of the Jesuits in 1767. No school system, religious or public, has made a true comeback since; illiteracy ranges upward from fifty per cent in all countries.

Analyzing the natural factors contributing to the weakness of the Latin Church is risky business, for the Holy Spirit will remain non-assessable this side of history. Discussion of historical and social elements only leaves out this Principal Cause of the reality (the Church) we would study. And this briefest of statements evolves compound risk because volumes have been, and many more should be, written on each of the points. Nevertheless, cushioned about with caveats, I rush on.

The Latin Church *is* weak. Everyone has heard that. But how weak shocks the visitor. The simplest index—only 32,656 priests for 156 million Catholics, one priest to 4777 members (as compared with one priest per 650 Catholics in the U.S.)—is staggering. And this woeful lack of priests is not improving. In 1955 only 668 priests were ordained for 156 million Catholic people, a ratio of one to 233,000 souls. In 1957 in the U. S. we had one new priest for each 25,000 Catholics.

Some areas are worse off than others. Bishop José Manuel Santos of Valdivia in south Chile recently made a diocesan survey netting this heart-rending report: For a population of 175,000 Catholics, ten diocesan priests (of whom three are sick), nineteen religious priests (several of whom are teaching rather than caring for souls). On the average Sunday, 5.7 per cent attend Mass; 2.8 per cent fulfill their Easter duties; 48 per cent do not attend church at all; 14 per cent of the children are unbaptized. One diocesan priest was ordained in 1950; no more for the diocese since then; in the interim six priests have died.

One estimate places the number of Protestant missionaries from the U.S. in Latin America at six thousand, and there are only 750 priests from the U.S. in the same area, some 1200 sisters and only twenty lay missionaries. The parish of San Pedro, La Paz, Bolivia, with 45,000 souls, is staffed by three Maryknoll priests, for example. But in September 1956 a pioneer parish was founded in La Paz by three secular priests of the United States archdiocese of St. Louis. The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Humberto Mozzoni, requested Archbishop Joseph E. Ritter to send a team of diocesan priests to Bolivia as missionaries and Archbishop Ritter asked for volunteers among some sixty priests who had been ordained five to ten years. Within a week forty of these priests volunteered.

Three of these diocesans, suddenly turned into mis-

sionaries, now staff a parish of 12,000 souls in the heart of the Andes. So far they have no church, only a galvanized iron-roofed shed, open on four sides. Mass is also offered in the open air half a mile uphill in a slum area now dominated by a Protestant church of the Nazarenes served by a Bolivian minister. The Sunday I offered the Sacrifice, about 250, half children and half adult, were present. Not more than a dozen of these would have normally attended had not the St. Louis jeep brought the Mass to them. The collection, incidentally, was ninety-five cents; in the main parish set-up—the shed—eight hundred people at the three Masses gave about nine dollars. The Church here is poor. I did not find a single non-American priest who owned an automobile.

A lone priest from La Crosse, Wisconsin, visited Bolivia last year and was so moved by the need of the people that he sought and obtained his bishop's permission to return as a missionary. And Archbishop Armand Lombardi, Nuncio to Brazil, tells enthusiastically of the six secular priests from the diocese of Nicolet, Canada, who came into the Amazon valley two years ago. Nuncios and ordinaries, pastors and people, all express the hope that these pioneering teams from North American dioceses may be multiplied in short order. Archbishop Ritter of St. Louis thinks of his diocese as a missionary-sending institution. Archbishop Richard Cushing of Boston comments that whereas his archdiocese has some one hundred priests "on land-lease," none is in Latin America. He projects a missionary society of diocesan priests expressly to rush help south of the border. Lay groups like the Grail and the Association for International Development are intensifying their mission programs.

By this emphasis upon diocesan and lay mission effort I in no way depreciate the work of the religious. But the call is so great that the whole Church must needs answer. In Latin America, about one-third of the world's Catholics are served by one-eleventh of the world's priests. And perhaps less than two-thirds of these, six per cent of the world's priests, are actually caring for souls in the pastoral ministry.

To worsen this sad situation, Latin America's population will increase two hundred per cent by the year 2000, from today's 189 million to a projected 592 million. Who will provide churches and schools, the Sacrifice and sacraments for these additional 400 million souls in the next forty-two years? By the year 2000 Latin America through its high birth rate of "born Catholics" could have well over half the world's Catholic population, but there may be for many tens of millions no Church for them to be born into.

THIS WEAKNESS of the Church in Latin America is the dominant impression I bring—but still the Faith lives! Despite lack of clergy and instruction, and

the neglect of Mass and the sacraments, there yet remains a fundamental spirit of "I am a Catholic; our nation is Catholic." It is uncanny, in view of the socio-historical realities, how the Faith has stuck it out, in some elusive, hazy fashion. "From the milk of our mothers," the saying goes.

This belief is not a deliberated doctrine assented to by the intellect, but an inherited complex of fiestas, processions, hymns and customs, derived from and nourished by the liturgy with imaginative adaptations. These quasi-liturgical expressions contain the elements of Catholic doctrine, it is true, but this Faith fed by folkways will not continue indefinitely. Education is coming with its "whys and wherefores" which put such a "faith" to the test.

For the moment it is hopeful to see this elemental Faith react vigorously to instruction, care and love, and Catholic missionaries in general are reaping a great harvest. Conceive of kindling waiting to be ignited—that's the Latin Church.

There remains much else to tell: the Consejo Episcopal Latino Americano, a much needed N. C. W. C. kind of affiliation of the 469 ordinaries, begun two years ago; the Christian Family Movement, with its top lay leaders and high promise; the recent reorganization of seminaries and the founding of universities; the radio schools and the intellectual ferment; and, of course, the absentee landlordism and laissez-faire economics which breed Communism and indigenous dictators.

You meet heroic priests like Father Carlos Garavito in the Colombian Andes: I am convinced he is another Curé of Ars. And prelates who love the slum-dweller, like Archbishop Helder Camara of Rio de Janeiro. And organizing, indefatigable thinkers like Bishop Manuel Lorrain of Talca, Chile, who points out the Church's duty beyond sacristy and sanctuary, despite her lack of priests: "Latin America is on the threshold of imminent and radical reforms. Shocking social inequality, the existence of immense proletarian and subproletarian masses living in inhuman conditions, the monopoly of land ownership . . . and the general lack of social awareness on the part of the well-to-do Catholics—all show how urgent it is to take a definite stand in this regard. With us or without us, social reform is going to take place; in the latter event, it will take place against us."

Finally, the cultural compass of Latin America has been set toward Paris since the French Revolution. Now the needle turns toward the U. S. A.—in matters economic, military and political, and even in education, the arts, family patterns and general mores. We of the Church in the United States must open our ears, extend our hearts and hands to these our brothers in the Faith, to become more perfectly with them the Body of Christ.

THE STAGE

THE LIMITS OF LYRICISM

MR. CHRISTOPHER FRY sees his early tragedy of necessity, "The Firstborn," as an account closed, and indeed the play will but indifferently alter one's sense of Mr. Fry's theater or its enigma. Of his moral poise and attentiveness to spirit, his baroque elegance, gentility of wit, that discreet waiting on life, it makes ever an impressive statement. What it denies to expectation is anything like a dramatic rhythm—inevitability, private pressure, even, in the Aristotelian term, "plot"—which might project such personal distinction into energy. The quietism which is Mr. Fry's commitment is hostile to drama, challenges its assumptions: no matter what tensions are implicit in this playwright's chosen substance—here, old rankling antagonisms of Moses and Pharaoh, and the terrible smittings of justice set loose in the jungle of time—he resolves them in a gentle flux of lyricism.

It is this lyricism in which Mr. Fry excels—the griefs and gaiety of the young, rueful tenderness, discoveries of the self or the dazzle of the world: these mark the distinguished pleasures of his theater. He is less at ease in any conscious labor of elevation, and personal relations are for him more an occasion of rhetoric than an actuality. His figures sing lovely liquid arias of sound, and stand in solitude as the cascade falls melodiously on the heedless air. The world of "The Firstborn" is profoundly solipsistic. One need recall only what intricate dramatic statements Cocteau and Giraudoux and Anouilh have made of the archaic substance of Greek myth to measure the loss involved in Mr. Fry's total surrender to lyricism. The story of Exodus, with its racial echoes, indestructible motifs of religious anguish and deliverance, is vastly more resonant than, say, the Medea legend, but it becomes, in "The Firstborn," neither lucid nor urgent. It is hardly to be compassed within the movement of Mr. Fry's verse: that movement Mr. Raymond Williams has called "a loose sliding away from speech, a monotone of seeming, with slow, wide meanders into adjective and adjectival phrase . . . always on the outside of statement." Justice demands that one stress the chastening of verse in Mr. Fry's later dramas, notably "The Dark is Light Enough," but beyond this, I have no further response to "The Firstborn."

There is a melancholy about Miss Katherine Cornell's production which is not to be dispelled. She has labored at this with such sincerity and aspiration, brought to it the instrumental quality of her person and infallible glamour of presence, commanded divers large talents—yet the result cannot be said to come off more than mildly. Mr. Anthony Quayle, as director, has ar-

ranged a series of stately tableaux through which he wanders, as Moses, with insistent eloquence. In his dual task, Mr. Quayle seems to have no large or vital ideas about "The Firstborn"; he permits recurrent monotonies of tone, and insists on nothing more than a decent, lucid statement, without personal accent or definition. I am alone, too—one gathers—in taking less than pleasure in the physical production. "The Firstborn" offers suggestive opportunities in costume and decor for a fresh translation of archaic motifs. Mr. Boris Aronson complies with tangible but prosaic designs, and Mr. Robert Fletcher's clothes—dun-colored or gaudy, excessively assertive with their laborious realism—mark a distinct falling-off for this artist. Let Mr. Cecil DeMille torment himself with verities of historical fact: the theater artist must see his costumes primarily neither as reproductions nor display but as extensions and embodiments of the dramatic theme. It is, of course, the diffusion and drift of theme which denies strength to the direction, decor and dresses of this play.

Miss Cornell's conscious nobility, her ceremoniousness, the intimate quest of her voice are potent again, and will never cease to be, one hopes. If her personality shows no fresh expansion, she announces nonetheless a personal distinction too easily patronized in a time which offers so little to the energies of idealism. I could wish myself, often, for rather a less automatic invocation of grandeur and for the admission, into Miss Cornell's sense of life, of more moral ambiguity, soil and grit: but then she is the prisoner—perhaps not too unwilling—of that secular hagiography of our time which exacts, as the price of public fondness, comforting esthetic images of the undiluted and the simplistic. We, no less than Miss Cornell, are the poorer. (*At the Coronet.*)

MR. TENNESSEE WILLIAMS'S singular new play, "Garden District," which I have yet to discuss, is in its last weeks at the York Playhouse, and must be seen without delay.

RICHARD HAYES.

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THE SCREEN

WHAT MAKES RITA RUN?

TRYING TO explain how their leading characters got the way they are is a favorite sport of movies lately. Almost the entirety of Paddy Chayefsky's new film is devoted to this kind of cause and effect; and while "The Goddess" doesn't actually come off as a movie, it is one of the most successful and fascinating failures of the year. Milton Perlman gave the picture its imaginative production—with handsome black-and-white photography that fits the story's somber mood, with some interesting music by Virgil Thompson, and with actors who prefer acting to winning glamorous stories in the fan magazines.

Although this is Chayefsky's first screenplay written expressly for the movies, it is surprisingly episodic and theatrical in style. It is even divided into three acts. The first is labeled "Portrait of a Girl" and shows four-year-old Emily Ann Faulkner unwanted and unloved by her frivolous mother (Betty Lou Holland). As Emily Ann grows into adolescence in a Southern town (the role is now played by Kim Stanley), she dreams of escaping from her drab home by becoming a Hollywood star; out of loneliness and fear of having no dates, she allows her boy friends promiscuities; and then, partly out of sympathy and longing for respectability and partly for his good connections, she marries a neurotic young soldier (Steve Hill), who is the sad neglected son of a Hollywood personality, but he soon walks out on her. When the realities of motherhood become too burdensome, she leaves her unwanted baby with its grandmother and makes tracks for Hollywood.

Part two, "Portrait of a Young Woman," shows her as a starlet, now named Rita Shawn, with some talent, great ambition and loose morals when she wants a role. Her second marriage, with an ex-prize fighter (Lloyd Bridges) to whom she is faithful for a while, ends in boredom for him and stardom for her when she plays up to the right producer. The third act, called "Portrait of a Goddess," shows Rita some six years later as an established star and also a mess. Rich, famous and friendless, she is a hard-drinking neurotic, who tries psychiatry without success, and then religion, which helps only temporarily. We last see Rita in 1957 as a drunk at her mother's funeral.

Although Chayefsky's material is contrived and his script often seems more like an exaggerated case history than reality, "The Goddess" has flashes of truth and exciting drama that make it absorbing. The separate scenes don't always hang together well, but John Cromwell has directed many of them expertly and some of them have the revealing brilliance of "Citizen Kane" and "Grapes of Wrath." Acting honors of course go to

Kim Stanley, who gives a magnificent performance. She doesn't look like a Hollywood star but her style and wide range in this *tour de force* might be the envy of many an Oscar-winning goddess. It is unfortunate that the picture's sordid story did not balance its messages about love, environment, sin and fame more effectively. But while "The Goddess" may not be convincing, it is at least never dull.

IN TELLING the story of Diana Barrymore, "Too Much, Too Soon" also tries to display a loveless and sordid background that accounts for a girl's going wrong. The first part of the picture concentrates so heavily on Diana's mother and father that it has little time to work up much sympathy for the neglected girl. Neva Patterson is excellent as the mother, that cold, intellectual poet Michael Strange, who didn't hate her divorced husband but did hate what he'd become and the way he wasted his great talents. In the role of John Barrymore, Errol Flynn is quite effective as the handsome, flamboyant drunk, but inadequate (as perhaps most players would be) in suggesting the fine Shakespearean actor that Barrymore was. Dorothy Malone first makes Diana a colorless and somewhat pathetic little thing, confused by parents who turn their interest on and off, and then a disgusting alcoholic who drifts from husband to husband without standards or ambitions.

Perhaps because Diana's story is so contemporary, the facts and characters had to be changed considerably. The chief villain of the piece is Diana's second husband, well played by Ray Danton and told off by Diana as "a weak, sadistic tennis bum." Alcohol is another villain, and the picture drags us along as Diana sinks lower and lower. Although her story, based on the book which Miss Barrymore wrote with Gerold Frank, is similar to Lillian Roth's, "Too Much, Too Soon" is shoddier as a movie than "I'll Cry Tomorrow," and less convincing. It wallows more and works up little warmth for its heroine until the vaguely hopeful finale.

WILLIAM BONNEY gets the cause-and-effect treatment in "The Left-Handed Gun," which doesn't try to justify the infamous killer known as Billy the Kid, but to explain him. The screenplay, written by Leslie Stevens from a play by Gore Vidal, is full of psychology and symbolism; and Fred Coe's production, directed by Arthur Penn and beautifully photographed in 1880 sets and the great outdoors, is determinedly arty. Its story is concerned with Billy and two pals who vow vengeance on the four men who ruthlessly killed their kindly boss. The trouble is that one killing leads to another in this dog-eat-dog world, and while the picture tries to handle everything on a high-class, intellectual plane, it also includes too much shock, violence and rough-and-tumble. Outstanding in the large cast are Paul Newman, who is excellent as the temperamental,

moody killer, James Best and James Congdon as his irresponsible pals, and John Dehner as the sheriff who first tries to defend and help the kid, but finally does him in. Hurd Hatfield hangs around during most of the film as a sort of ghoulish, one-man Greek chorus. He failed to convince me that this is a Greek tragedy set in New Mexico, but he may persuade others.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

SMALLER CARS

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: In the editorial in your issue of April 25 on the subject of the automobile industry, you say "As we read it the Eisenhower thesis is that the American people want smaller cars and less chrome." In the next paragraph you indicate disagreement with the idea "that any large section of the American public rejects the kind of styling Detroit has been following in recent years."

I am in a position categorically to contradict this last, since in the literal sense I am a large section of the American public. I am just short of 6' 3"; and my principal objection to Detroit styling is that it is more and more designed for midgets. It is years since I have been able to enter, leave or travel comfortably in a New York taxicab. I am still driving a 1951 Buick, for the simple reason that later models are impossible.

My trouble with Detroit styling can be illustrated by the following episode: My daughter (who has a small Swedish car in which I have plenty of leg and head room) recently persuaded me to try a small German car (a Borgwardt), in which I likewise had adequate leg and head room, which is said to do about thirty-four miles to the gallon. For purposes of comparison I went to the Buick salesroom and asked them to show me the shortest car on their line with the most head and leg room. They showed me a model approximately seventy feet long (or so it seemed) with something better than twice the gas consumption of the Borgwardt. It was impossible for me to sit up straight in the driver's seat without banging my head against the roof; and in order for my feet to be comfortable at the pedals, the salesman said it would be necessary to install an extra track for the front seat.

This suggests to me that two major elements of our economy are working at loggerheads. The orange juice and vitamin group are constantly increasing the size of the American male. The automotive industry is constantly decreasing the available room in their cars. One or the other of these must reverse its trend if the Republic is to survive.

PORTER R. CHANDLER.

Travel Books for Children

by CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP

EVEN TO present-day, space-minded youngsters, travel abroad, on this very earth, still holds the magic of remoteness. It seems quite normal that forty years ago, boys, a few girls and many adults should have sat spellbound as they read the lively account of Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*. But why should young and old of the atomic age flock day after day and month after month to see the film based on such an outmoded performance while Sputniks and Explorers are circling the globe in less than two hours? It is largely because in the film as in the book, the earth and its inhabitants come fully to life. Here we are shown that the most distant and wildest corners of the earth are not just meeting points of geometric coordinates. The spirit of man hovers over all.

Terrestrial voyage may include dangers and anxiety. It may require of men heroic courage. Whether we travel by land, sea or air, we are still, so to speak, on familiar "ground," on our own territory. But a voyage on this familiar earth has not become a humdrum affair. Not yet. The names resoundingly and incessantly called out over the megaphones of countless airport waiting rooms still retain their prestige and enchanting capacity for most of us—Rome, Timbuctoo, Cairo, Athens, Istanbul, Moscow, Karachi, Calcutta, Hong Kong.

And these names are even more removed and romantic for children. Little Tom is but "two lunches" away from Italy, and yet to him Italy might just as well be Mars. Wiping away physical distance is not sufficient to bring the neighbor nearer to us. Also, we know now that, on the contrary, it may well lay stress on our reciprocal strangeness. The fascination of the earth, it is clear, is far from being spent.

In spring, more than at any other time of the year, young and old hear the call of the road. Whether or not boys and girls can be taken on a trip abroad, it seems to me that spring is the ideal time for books about other countries, books with lively drawings or excellent photographs. The first and necessary requirement of a travel book, of course, is sound information. Children will expect the writer to know what he is talking about. A story which takes place in a foreign country has to be based on a solid basis of accurate

facts, and this is all the more so for non-fiction travel books. Today, youngsters are used to accuracy and they respect only the writer who does not rest content with approximation. The problem for the writer is that sheer information is usually powerless to rouse the interest of most youngsters. It is, therefore, best to combine facts and adventure. In this way the feeling of another country can be satisfactorily evoked.

THIS is far from being as simple as it sounds. The writer needs not only a thorough knowledge of the history, geography, customs and economic conditions of the country, but also of the psychology of its inhabitants. This may seem fairly evident but it is a self-evident rule that is often violated. Finally the writer should be able to interpret the foreign country in terms related to the child's experience. He should strive to find a common denominator which helps the child to proceed from the familiar to the unknown.

The above prerequisites hold for writers of any nationality writing for children about any other country. When it comes to travel books for American children it seems to me that the writer should always keep in the back of his mind two special aspects of the problem. Nine times out of ten, writing about a foreign land entails consideration of children less privileged than those of America. The fact that three people out of five go to bed hungry every night should never be wholly absent from the writer's consciousness. One can bring this home to American children without arousing either complacent and smug satisfaction over the American living standard, or self-comforting charitable impulses.

The other aspect which should be emphasized is the positive world contribution of other countries in cultural and moral values which constitute a treasure that no material achievement can match. It is only in mutual respect and appreciation of each other's spiritual values that fruitful friendship can develop.

Such are it seems to me the main points to bear in mind when writing or buying a travel book for American children—sound information, psychological understanding, sensitive interpretation, concern for world conditions, stress on spiritual heritage. This, I believe, will help the youngster to grow into neither a tourist nor a benefactor, but a warm and thoughtful friend, who enjoys visiting his neighbors on this earth.

Mrs. Bishop, well known as an authority in the juvenile book field, has written a number of books for children.

A Selected List of Children's Books

by CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP

AROUND THE WORLD IN STORIES AND FACTS

Lee Po's Search. By Hester Hawkes. Ill. by Haris Petie. Coward-McCann. \$2.50.

It was a matter of life and death for this Chinese family to find twigs and dry leaves to make a fire. How little Lee Po's tender feeling for animals helped him in his search makes an unusual and timely picture story. 6-10.

Hidalgo and the Gringo Train. By Fay Griffith. Ill. by Kelly Oeschli. Dutton. \$2.95.

Out of the Gringo train flew a book with pictures which led Hidalgo, the little Mexican herder, to a heroic deed and much happiness. Both the boy and the living conditions are well depicted. 6-10.

Takao and Grandfather's Sword. By Yoshiko Uchida. Ill. by William M. Hutchinson. Harcourt. \$2.50.

Takao, after he has brought disaster to his family, saves them from ruin and grows to maturity. Portrays well concerns and joys in a hard-working Japanese family. 8-11.

The Boy Who Cared. By Dorothy Aldis. Ill. by Charles Geer. Putnam. \$2.50.

How school children got the idea of helping people they did not know. The author has managed an unobtrusive and effective presentation of CARE within the frame of plausible home-grown happenings. 8-13.

So-Hi and the White Horse. By Cynon Beaton-Jones. Ill. by John Ward. Vanguard. \$3.

More about the delightful little Chinese boy and his fantastic adventures. Told again with a rare writing talent. The drawings are fine too. 8-12.

Dog Toby. By Richard Church. Ill. by Laurence Irving. John Day. \$2.75.

Unusual and moving present-day happenings on a border between two European countries. Brings into play the tense and distrustful atmosphere, the plight of war victims and the basic decency of people on either side. A little dog is the peacemaker. 10-14.

Yusuf: Boy of Cyprus. By Grace Rasp-Nuri. Trans. from the German by Maxwell Brownjohn. Criterion. \$3.50.

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Gift from the Mikado. By Elizabeth P. Fleming. Ill. by Janet Smalley. Westminster. \$2.95.

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Getting to Know. Coward-McCann. \$2.50. 8-13.

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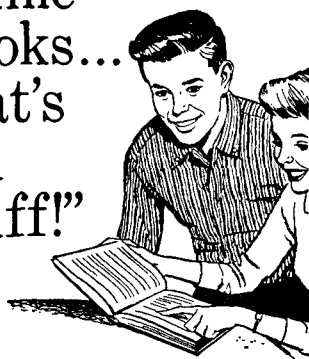
Panama. By Dee Day. Ill. by Don Lambo.

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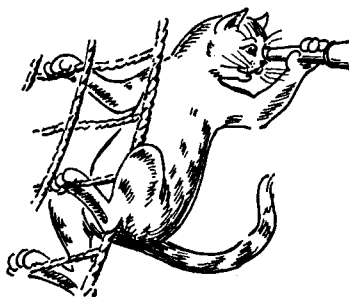
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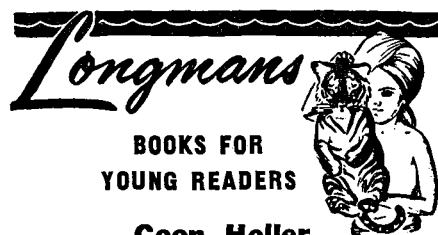
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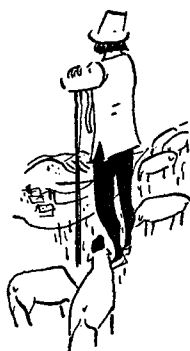
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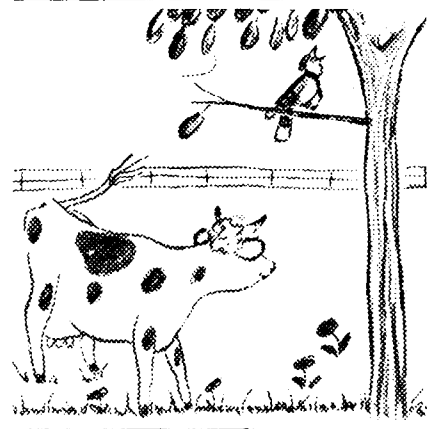
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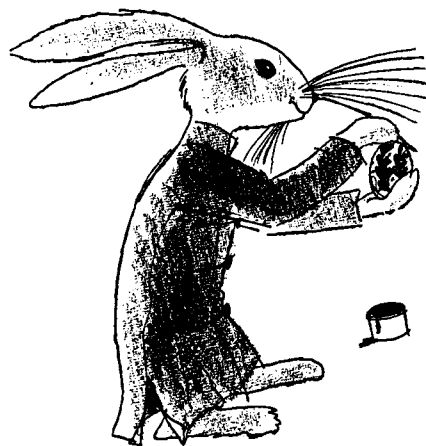
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